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Introduction to Cabeza de Vaca and his Account

This module serves as a brief introduction to Cabeza de Vaca's *La Relación/Naufragios* (The Account). It provides biographical information and a brief outline of the document. It is intended for high school and college students. For a translated Spanish version, please see, "*La Relación de Cabeza de Vaca: Una introducción*" (<http://cnx.org/content/m38116/latest/>).

Biographical information

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was born in around 1460 in Jerez de la Frontera, a town in Andalusia, Spain, to Francisco de Vera and Teresa Cabeza de Vaca. His genealogy is important to note, as his lineage boasts a rich military history. His father served as a soldier, while his paternal grandfather, Pedro de Vera Mendoza, was among the conquerors of the Canary Islands (Suñe 117). His mother's side included a fleet captain (Álvar Núñez); a Grand Master of the Order of Santiago; and Martín Alhaja, the shepherd honored by King Sancho with the name "Cabeza de Vaca" (Favata and Fernández 12). Martín Alhaja earned this name by aiding in the Spanish victory in the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in July 1212. Alhaja approached the Spanish camp and offered to help the army by identifying an unguarded mountain pass with a cow's skull. As a result, the Spanish Christian army was able to mount a surprise attack on the Moors. Since it was not uncommon to give children their mother's last name (either in addition to their father's last name or by itself), Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was named after his mother's prominent ancestor.

Cabeza de Vaca

Portrait of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca



Following his relatives' footsteps, Cabeza de Vaca entered the military as a young adult and served the Spanish army in Italy (parts of Italy belonged to Spain at the time). After the Battle of Ravenna on April 11, 1512 [\[footnote\]](#), he was promoted to *alférez* (second lieutenant)(Favata and Fernández 12). In 1513, he returned to Seville and served the Duke of Medina Sidonia (Favata and Fernández 12). In 1520, Cabeza de Vaca and the Duke helped put an end to the citizen uprising during the Revolt of the Comuneros. [\[footnote\]](#)

One of the battles between the French and the Holy League (Spain and the Papal states) during the War of the League of Cambrai. During the *Guerra de las Comunidades de Castilla*, the citizens revolted against King Carlos I's rule.

The Narváez expedition

In 1527, Pánfilo Narváez, the governor of Cuba, received royal orders to conquer the lands between Río de las Palmas (modern-day Río Soto la Marina in Tamaulipas, Mexico) and the Florida peninsula (Krieger 21). Cabeza de Vaca, equipped with letters of recommendation from Cadiz nobility (due to his connections to the Duke of Medina Sidonia), interviewed with Narváez to take part in his expedition (Suñe 118). This documentation proved sufficient, and on February 15, 1527, Cabeza de Vaca was appointed head treasurer (Favata and Fernández 12) and

constable, or *aguacil*, of the expedition (Suñe 118). Cabeza de Vaca may have married at this time; however, there is no record of any children (Favata and Fernández 12; Suñe 118).

Narváez's fleet included approximately 600 soldiers, colonizers, and sailors, as well as 12 wives and 5 monks. They first sailed to Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Spain and from there, set out for open seas on June 27, 1527 (Krieger 22). The smooth voyage to the New World was only interrupted by a short stop in the Canary Islands (Suñe 118); the fleet arrived in Santo Domingo (on the island of Hispaniola) and remained there for 45 days in order to obtain supplies and horses. During this time, 140 men deserted the fleet, tempted by "the proposals and promises made [to] them by the people of the country" (Cabeza de Vaca 1). The fleet then made its way to Santiago, Cuba, where they acquired provisions, arms, and more men. There, a man named Vasco Porcallo offered to give Narváez some supplies he had in Trinidad, a town located 100 leagues from the Santiago port. Narváez accepted, but only allowed one ship to sail to Trinidad, while the other ships remained in Cape Santa Cruz— the halfway point between Santiago and Trinidad. Captain Pantoja led this single ship and was accompanied by Cabeza de Vaca (1-2).

As if the desertion hadn't been bad enough, a hurricane then hit the Caribbean, destroying part of the fleet. Cabeza de Vaca describes the violent storm, from which they could not find shelter, in the following words: "Then the rain and storm increased in violence at the village, as well as on the sea, and all the houses and the churches fell down, and we had to go about, seven or eight men locking arms at a time, to prevent the wind from carrying us off, and under the trees it was not less dangerous than among the houses, for as they also were blown down we were in danger of being killed beneath them. In this tempest and peril we wandered about all night, without finding any part or place where we might feel safe for half an hour," (5). On the following day (Monday), Cabeza de Vaca and the other men searched the shore for their ships. Unable to find any wreckage, they turned their search to the forest, where they finally found one of the ships' small boats in a tree and their crew members' bodies. According to Cabeza de Vaca, 60 people and 20 horses died on the ships. Only the 30 who had come onto land survived (6).

Narváez and the other men, who had also battled the storm, arrived in Trinidad on November 5 in the four remaining ships. Terrified by the violent hurricane, the men begged Narváez to allow them to spend winter in Cuba before setting sail to Florida. He agreed and sent them, under Cabeza de Vaca's charge, to Xagua. In the meantime, Narváez most likely traveled across Cuba, gathering supplies, crew members, and ships (Krieger 22). He arrived in Xagua on February 20, 1528, with a new ship and a pilot named Miruelo; another ship, captained by Álvaro de la Cerda, awaited them in Havana. On February 22, the expedition set sail for Florida, with "400 men and eighty horses, on four vessels and one brigantine" (Cabeza de Vaca 8).

Miruelo soon "ran the vessels aground on the sands called 'of Canarreo,'" stranding them for 15 days until a storm pushed the ships off the sandbar (Cabeza de Vaca 8). Storms followed the fleet all the way to Florida. Finally, the crew spotted land on Tuesday, April 12, 1528. On Holy Thursday, they anchored the ships in the bay, and on Good Friday, they claimed the land in the name of Spain (9-10). At this point, only 42 of the 80 horses were still alive, and those remaining were so weak that they were useless (10).

Cabeza de Vaca's Route

Cabeza de Vaca's actual route is unknown, but this map shows 3 possibilities.



From there, they marched inland. After hostile encounters with the Native Americans, the Spaniards decided to return to the coast. At this point, only 200 men remained (Suñe 118). Clinging to hope, the men built 5 barges between August 4 and September 20 (Cabeza de Vaca 44). The men sailed west along the Gulf Coast in search of Pánuco, Mexico; they landed on Galveston Island (or west of it) on November 5 and 6, 1528 (Hall). It was here that they heard the natives speak of other Spaniards, members of another disastrous expedition. These men were: Alonzo del Castillo Maldonado, Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, and Estevanico (Dorantes' African slave, also known as "Estevan") (Krieger 1).

The remaining men lived among the natives for several years. In spring 1529, Castillo Maldonado, Dorantes de Carranza, Estevanico, and about 12 other men left the sick Cabeza de Vaca (he probably had malaria) in search of Pánuco again (Cabeza de Vaca 101-3). The rest of the spring and summer, Cabeza de Vaca migrated with the Karankawa Indians, helping gather food, performing menial tasks, and even as a merchant, trading between tribes (104-6). Cabeza de Vaca wasn't the only Spaniard left behind—both Alaniz and Lope de Oviedo had stayed behind (although the latter stayed by choice). Alaniz died shortly after the men left, and it took Cabeza de Vaca almost 3 years to convince Oviedo to escape with him (109). In the meantime, Cabeza de Vaca escaped from the tribe and lived alone in the wilderness (107).

Finally, in the summer of 1532, Oviedo agreed to go with Cabeza de Vaca down the coast. Surprisingly enough, on the southern tip of Matagorda Bay (between Galveston and Corpus Christi, Texas), the pair discovered that Dorantes de Carranza, Castillo Maldonado, and Estevanico were being held prisoners by the Quevenes. Rather than risk imprisonment alongside his countrymen, Oviedo decided to turn back (111). The remaining men escaped at last in spring 1535 and slowly made their way westward, crossing the continent

In December 1535, the men began to hear stories and see traces of Christians (Cabeza de Vaca 231-239). In late January, Cabeza de Vaca stumbled upon some Spaniards on a slaving expedition, who were "greatly startled" to see him "in such a strange attire, and in company with Indians"

(239). Shortly afterward, Cabeza de Vaca and his men found themselves at odds with their countrymen: “Thereupon we had many and bitter quarrels with the Christians, for they wanted to make slaves of our Indians...” (244). After preventing the enslavement of their Native American companions, the four men finally arrived in Mexico City in July 1536.

Publication

Cabeza de Vaca’s account of the events, [missing_resource: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27425>] *Naufregios, La Relación, La Relación General, The Account, The Journey, The Narrative*) was originally written as an official report to the King Carlos I of Spain. [footnote] It was later publicly published in Zamora in 1542 and a second edition was published in Valladolid in 1555. This account is considered to be the first historical narration about the United States and chronicles some of the first Native American-European interaction, the Europeans’ struggle to survive (as preconceived notions of civilization and barbarianism collide), the act of exploration and discovery, and the challenges faced by the individual himself.

King Carlos I of Spain was also known as Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire and Carlos I of Spain and V of Germany.

La relación

Cover for one of the first publications of Cabeza de Vaca's *La relación y comentarios*



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La Relación de Cabeza de Vaca: Una introducción

Esto es una introducción a La Relación/Naufragios de Cabeza de Vaca. Da información biográfica y un resumen breve del texto. Esta introducción fue escrita para estudiantes de colegio (high school) y de universidad.

Traducción del módulo, "Introduction to Cabeza de Vaca and his Account" (<http://cnx.org/content/m34644/latest/>).

Información biográfica

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca nació alrededor de 1460 en Jerez de la Frontera, en Andalucía, España. Sus padres fueron Francisco de Vera y Teresa Cabeza de Vaca. Es importante notar la historia militar de su genealogía. Su padre fue soldado; y su abuelo paterno, Pedro de Vera Mendoza, fue uno de los conquistadores de las Islas Canarias (Suñe 117). El lado de su madre incluyó un capitán de flotilla (Álvar Núñez); un gran maestro de la Orden de Santiago; y Martín Alhaja, un pastor honrado por el Rey Sancho con el nombre “Cabeza de Vaca” (Favata y Fernández 12). Martín Alhaja se ganó el honor de este nombre por haber ayudado lograr la victoria española en la Batalla de Las Navas de Tolosa en July 1212. Alhaja les ayudó a los españoles al identificar un desfiladero desprotegido con la calavera de una vaca. Por consiguiente, el ejército española cristiana pudo montar un ataque sorpresa contra los moros. Como era común darle el apellido materno a los niños (solo o junto con el apellido del padre), Álvar Núñez fue llamado por el pariente prominente de su madre.

Cabeza de Vaca

Retrato de Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca



Siguiendo los pasos de sus parientes, Cabeza de Vaca entró en el ejército como joven y sirvió en el ejército español en Italia (partes de Italia eran posesión española en aquel tiempo). Después de la Batalla de Ravenna el 11 de abril 1512,[\[footnote\]](#) fue promovido al grado de alférez (Favata y Fernández 12). En 1513, regresó a Sevilla y sirvió bajo el Duque de Medina Sidonia (Favata y Fernández 12). En 1520, Cabeza de Vaca y el Duque ayudaron aplastar la revuelta durante la Guerra de las Comunidades de Castilla.[\[footnote\]](#)

Una de las batallas entre Francia y la Liga Santa (España y los Estados Pontificios) durante la Guerra de la Liga de Cambrai.

Durante la Guerra de las Comunidades de Castilla, los ciudadanos se levantaron contra el reinado de Carlos I.

La expedición Narváez

En 1527, Pánfilo Narváez, el gobernador de Cuba, recibió órdenes reales de conquistar las tierras entre Río de las Palmas (hoy, Río Soto la Marina en Tamaulipas, México) y la península de la Florida (Krieger 21). Cabeza de Vaca, equipado con cartas de recomendación de la nobleza de Cadiz (debido a sus conexiones con el Duque de Medina Sigonia), fue entrevistado por Narváez para ser parte de su expedición (Suñe 118). Esta documentación fue suficiente y Cabeza de Vaca fue nombrado tesorero y aguacil mayor de la expedición el 15 de febrero de 1527 (Suñe 118). Es

posible que Cabeza de Vaca se casó en estos años, pero no hay récord de niños (Favata y Fernández 12).

La armada de Narváez incluía aproximadamente 600 soldados, colonizadores, y marineros, como también 12 esposas y 5 monjes. Viajaron primero a Sanlúcar de Barrameda, España y desde allí, hacia el mar abierto el 27 de junio 1527 (Krieger 22). El viaje tranquilo hacia el Mundo Nuevo sólo fue interrumpido por una parada breve en las Islas Canarias (Suñe 118); la armada llegó a Santo Domingo (en la isla de Hispaniola) y allí se quedó por 45 días para obtener reservas y caballos. Durante este tiempo, 140 hombres abandonaron la armada, tentados “por los partidos y promesas que los de la tierra les hicieron” (Cabeza de Vaca). Luego la armada partió para Santiago, Cuba, donde se “[rehicieron] de gente, de armas y de caballos” (Cabeza de Vaca). Allí, un hombre llamado Vasco Porcallo le ofreció a Narváez unas provisiones que tenía en Trinidad, un pueblo ubicado 100 leguas del puerto de Santiago. Narváez aceptó, pero sólo mandó un navío a Trinidad, mientras que los otros se quedaron en el Cabo de Santa Cruz— a mitad del camino entre Santiago y Trinidad. El Capitán Pantoja estaba encargado del navío que iba hacia Trinidad y Cabeza de Vaca lo acompañó (Cabeza de Vaca).

Y como si no fuera suficiente el abandono previo, un huracán llegó al Caribe, destruyendo parte de la armada. Cabeza de Vaca describe la tormenta violenta (de la cual no pudieron encontrar refugio) en la siguiente manera: “A esta hora el agua y la tempestad comenzó a crecer tanto, que no menos tormenta había en el pueblo que en el mar, porque todas las casas e iglesias se cayeron, y era necesario que anduviésemos siete u ocho hombres abrazados unos con otros para podernos amparar que el viento no nos llevase; y andando entre los árboles, no menos temor teníamos de ellos que de las casas, porque como ellos también caían, no nos matasen debajo. En esta tempestad y peligro anduvimos toda la noche, sin hallar parte ni lugar donde media hora pudiésemos estar seguros”. Al día siguiente (lunes), Cabeza de Vaca y los otros hombres buscaron sus naves a las orillas del mar. Al no encontrar nada, empezaron a buscar en los montes, donde finalmente encontraron la barquilla de un navío en un árbol y los cuerpos de sus compañeros. De acuerdo con Cabeza de Vaca, 60 personas y 20 caballos

murieron en los navíos. Sólo los 30 que habían desembarcado sobrevivieron (Cabeza de Vaca).

Narváez y los otros hombres, que también habían sobrevivido la tormenta, llegaron a Trinidad el 5 de noviembre en los 4 navíos que quedaban. Asustados por el huracán violento, los hombres le rogaron a Narváez que los dejara pasar el invierno en Cuba antes de viajar hacia Florida. Estuvo de acuerdo y los mandó a Xagua bajo el cargo de Cabeza de Vaca. Durante este tiempo, Narváez probablemente cruzó Cuba, colectando provisiones, tripulación, y navíos (Krieger 22). Llegó a Xagua el 20 de febrero 1528, con un navío nuevo y un piloto llamado Miruelo; otro navío, capitaneado por Álvaro de la Cerda, los esperaba en La Habana. El 22 de febrero, la expedición partió para Florida, con “cuatrocientos hombres y ochenta caballos en cuatro navíos y un bergantín” (Cabeza de Vaca).

No pasó mucho tiempo antes de que Miruelo “metió los navíos por los bajíos que dicen de Canarreo, de manera que otro día dimos en seco, y así estuvimos quince días, tocando muchas veces las quillas de los navíos en seco” hasta que una tormenta “metió tanta agua en los bajíos, que [pudieron] salir” (Cabeza de Vaca). Tormentas persiguieron la armada hasta Florida. Finalmente, vieron tierra martes el 12 de abril 1528. El Jueves Santo, echaron anclas en la bahía, y el Viernes Santo, tomaron posesión de la tierra en nombre de España (Cabeza de Vaca). En este momento, sólo 42 de los 80 caballos aún estaban vivos, y los que estaban vivos estaban tan débiles que eran inútiles (Cabeza de Vaca).

Ruta de Cabeza de Vaca

No se sabe la ruta exacta de Cabeza de Vaca, pero este mapa muestra 3 posibilidades.



Desde allí, entraron por la tierra adentro. Después de encuentros hostiles con los nativos, los españoles decidieron regresar a la costa. Sólo quedaban 200 hombres (Suñe 118). Afferados a la esperanza, los hombres construyeron 5 barcas entre el 4 de agosto y el 20 de septiembre (Cabeza de Vaca). Los hombres embarcaron hacia el oeste a lo largo de la costa del Golfo de México, buscando Pánuco, México. Desembarcaron en la Isla de Galvestón (o al oeste de allí) el 5 y 6 de noviembre 1528. Aquí, escucharon a los nativos hablar de otros españoles, miembros de otra expedición desastrosa. Estos hombres eran: Alonzo del Castillo Maldonado, Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, y Estevanico (el esclavo africano, también conocido como “Esteban”) (Krieger 1).

Todos estos hombres vivieron entre los nativos durante muchos años. En la primavera de 1529, Castillo Maldonado, Dorantes de Carranza, Estevanico, y aproximadamente 12 hombres dejaron al enfermo Cabeza de Vaca (probablemente tenía malaria) en búsqueda de Pánuco de nuevo (Cabeza de Vaca). Por el resto de la primavera y el verano, Cabeza de Vaca migró con los indios Karankawa, ayudándoles a recoger comida, llevar acabo tareas serviles, y hasta funcionando como comerciante, haciendo intercambios entre tribus (Cabeza de Vaca). Cabeza de Vaca no era el único español que dejaron atrás– Alaniz y Lope de Oviedo también se habían quedado (aunque éste se habían quedado por gusto). Alaniz falleció poco después de que se habían ido los hombres y Cabeza de Vaca se tardó casi tres años para convencer a Oviedo a que debería escapar con él (Cabeza de Vaca). Durante

estos años, Cabeza de Vaca se escapó y vivió solo en tierra salvaje (Cabeza de Vaca).

Finalmente, en el verano de 1532, Oviedo decidió viajar con Cabeza de Vaca a lo largo de la costa. Sorprendentemente, en la punta meridional de la Bahía Matagorda (entre Galvestón y Corpus Christi, Texas), encontraron a Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, y Estevanico, quienes habían sido tomados prisioneros por los Quevenes. No queriendo arriesgarse a ser hecho prisionero como sus amigos, Oviedo se regresó (Cabeza de Vaca). Los hombres que quedaron finalmente escaparon en la primavera de 1535 y empezaron a cruzar el continente, yendo hacia el oeste.

En diciembre 1535, los hombres empezaron a escuchar cuentos y ver señales de cristianos (Cabeza de Vaca). A finales de enero, Cabeza de Vaca se encontró con unos españoles en una partida de esclavos, “que recibieron gran alteración” de verlo “tan extrañamente vestido y en compañía de indios” (Cabeza de Vaca). Poco después, Cabeza de Vaca y sus compañeros se encontraron en desacuerdo con sus paisanos: “Y después de esto pasamos muchas y grandes pendencias con ellos, porque nos querían hacer los indios que traíamos esclavos” (Cabeza de Vaca). Después de prevenir la esclavitud de sus compañeros indios, los cuatro hombres llegaron por fin a la Ciudad de México en julio 1539.

Publicación

Originalmente, Cabeza de Vaca escribió [missing_resource: http://mith2.umd.edu/eada/html/display.php?docs=cabeza_sp.xml] *Naufragios, La Relación, La Relación General*) como un informe oficial para el Rey Carlos I de España. Después, se publicó en Zamora en 1542 y la segunda edición fue publicada en Valladolid en 1555. Esta relación es considerada ser la primera narración histórica sobre los Estados Unidos y narra algunas de las primeras interacciones entre los indios y europeos, la lucha de los europeos para sobrevivir, el choque entre nociones preconcebidas de la civilización y la barbarie, la exploración y el descubrimiento, y los retos enfrentados por el individuo.

La relación

Portada original de una de las primeras publicaciones de *La relación y comentarios*



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Spanish Catholic Missions and Border History

Using a travel journal and sketches of Catholic missions in southern Texas, this module investigates religion and colonialism in the Americas.

Spanish Catholic Missions and Border History

This module can help teach units on transatlantic encounters and colonial beginnings. The module's themes include: religion, border culture, and colonialism. Teachers might begin by introducing the history of mission establishment as one essential aspect of Spanish imperialism and border history, calling students to consider how religious institutions functioned as agents of colonialism. The history of the Texas missions provides an accessible classroom example, and is highlighted by a document in the [missing_resource: <http://oaap.rice.edu/index.php>][missing_resource: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27060>]

Highlighting the transatlantic beginnings of imperialism and the movements from which Spanish colonization began can help students understand the transnational and national implications of early imperialism. Teachers might begin by discussing what the term “transatlantic” means and how it fits into the history of colonialism, migration, and movement. Spanish colonialism and the Reconquista provide a more specific example. Spanish expeditions and missions in North America were the outgrowth of the Spanish Reconquista (718-1492). The energy of this religious-political movement, which espoused a more militant form of Catholicism, was channeled toward the conquest of the New World and the conversion of natives. Although Spanish political power was strongly affiliated with Catholicism, religion and political imperialism worked both for and against each other. Spanish settlers, soldiers, and Catholic missionaries often disagreed on how to interact and subdue the natives; however, both functioned as influential forms of colonial power. As historian Herbert E. Bolton wrote, “Designedly in part, and incidentally in part, they [the missionaries] were political and civilizing [...] and as such they constituted a vital feature of Spain's pioneering system” (46).

Map of Spanish Empire

World map of Spanish Empire

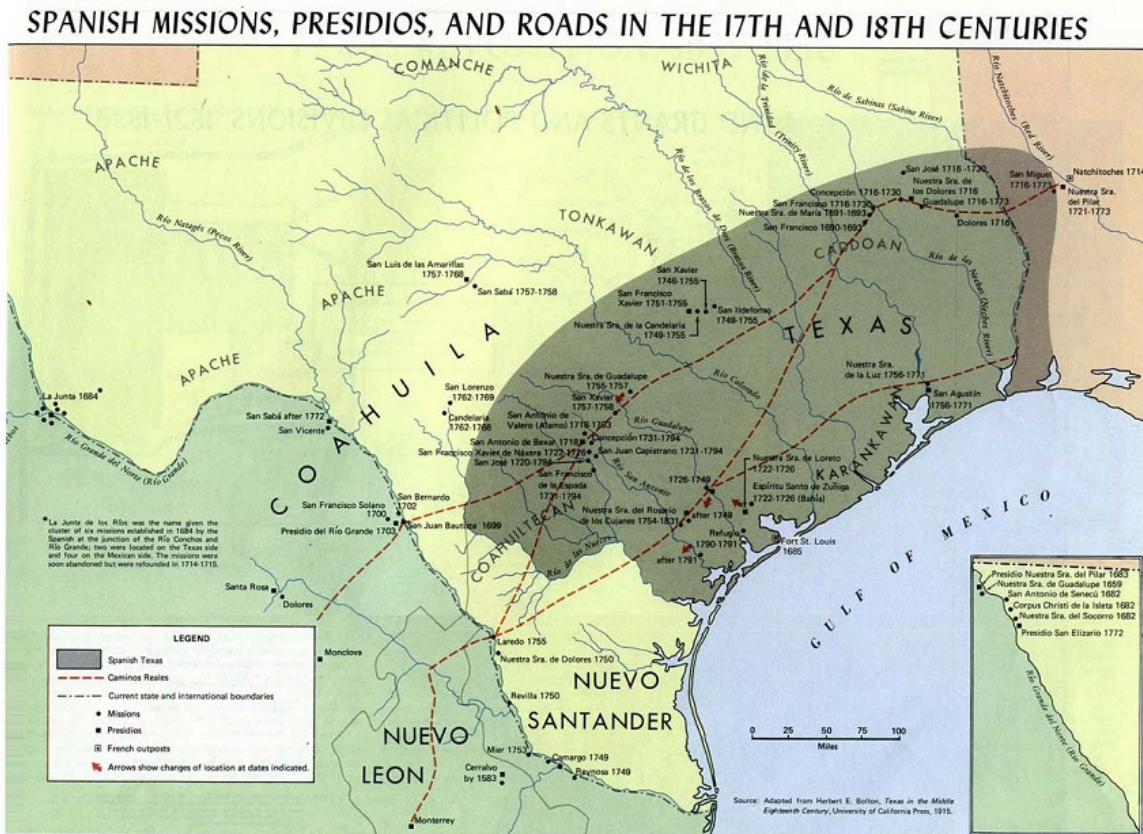


Texas Missions and Border History

Teachers can highlight how Spanish missionaries gradually constructed a series of missions that spans today's U.S. and Mexican national borders. Showing a map of the Texas Missions, such as the one below or the various maps in Chipman's *Spanish Texas* would allow students to chart the growth of Spanish empire and its religious missions. Threatened by the establishment of French settlements in Texas, Spanish missionaries moved from the southwestern U.S. into Texas and established the first mission, San Francisco de los Tejas, in 1690 near present-day Nacogdoches. Due to disease and flooding, the natives grew discontent and threatened the missionaries causing them to leave the area. The initial failure of San Francisco de los Tejas began a pattern of mission establishment, native discontent, and retreat. After the mission's failure, Spanish missionaries headed further south where they began establishing missions along the Rio Grande and within closer proximity to Spanish and Catholic settlements already working throughout Mexico. San Juan Bautista del Rio Grande was founded in 1700 and became the gateway to Spanish Texas (Chipman 107). Teachers can ask students what factors they think led to this recurring pattern between natives, settlers, and missionaries. What kind of difficulties did missionaries and Native Americans face when encountering each other? This provides an opportunity to discuss colonialism as a meeting of different cultures, languages, religions, and races.

Map of Catholic Missions in Texas

Map of Spanish Missions in Texas used with permission from "The Atlas of Texas," Bureau of Business Research, The University of Texas at Austin, 1976.



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Teachers can also emphasize how Spanish imperialism and missionary efforts moved in relation to other colonial empires, often working against and alongside French imperialism. Showing a map of the different empires working throughout the Americas can help students visualize how colonial boundaries compare with today's national boundaries. After years away from eastern Texas and the Tejas tribe, Spanish missionaries desired to reestablish missions in the area. Unable to receive adequate help from the Spanish, they sought out the French who, wanting to trade with the Spanish colonials, sent the notable Louis Juchereau de St. Denis in 1714, a Canadian officer and trader skilled in Native American languages. St. Denis helped to

establish missions in eastern Texas; however, due to lack of supplies and discontent among the natives, these missions struggled and were eventually abandoned in 1719 as missionaries retreated to San Antonio.

Texas Missions San José and Concepcion

Mission San José



Mission Concepcion



Sketches of Mission San José and Mission Concepcion
from John Russell Bartlett's *Personal Narrative*

The relocation toward southern Texas is an important movement for teachers to point out because it highlights a religious and colonial empire that spans today's national borders. Hoping to establish a way-station between the Rio Grande and the eastern Texas missions much in need of supplies and support, missionaries founded San Antonio de Valero in 1718. San Antonio de Valero, which later became the site of the Alamo, began as a humble structure of mud, brush, and straw. With the eventual success of San Antonio de Valero, missions San Jose and San Miguel were established nearby in 1720.

John Russell Bartlett's *Personal narrative of explorations & incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua*, volume 1 recalls another aspect of this history. This narrative provides details about the

structure of the San Antonio missions in the 19th century, noting how many missions had fallen into decay or been damaged during the Mexican-American War. His narrative offers a way to discuss these missions from their foundation in colonial Spanish America to their status after the Mexican-American War. He writes of one mission, “The whole town is in ruins, and presents a scene of desolation, which to an American is at once novel and interesting” (27). Using his narrative as a way to contextualize the early colonization of the American southwest calls students to consider how the missions and Spanish colonialism constructed a border history that extends from the period of Spanish colonialism, through the Mexican-American War, to the immigration disputes of the 21st century.

Mission San José and Mission Concepción

Mission San José



Mission Concepción



Missions San José and Mission Concepción in San Antonio, TX 2010.

Today, the San Antonio missions are part of a series of historical mission sites along the San Antonio National Parkway, including the Alamo, Mission San Jose (1720), Mission Concepcion (1731), Mission San Juan Capistrano (1731), and Mission Espada (1731). Bartlett visited the Alamo, Mission San Jose, Mission Concepcion, and Mission San Juan Capistrano, noting their decay and ruin. These missions were restored throughout the 20th century and commemorate an essential aspect of Spanish imperialism. Teachers could ask students to find contemporary photos of these sketches and compare the more current images with Bartlett's sketches and descriptions. Students could also research how these missions function today as sites that memorialize Spanish colonialism while continuing to serve current religious and cultural communities throughout Texas and its Mexican-American border.

Study Questions:

1. What is the relationship between the Spanish Catholic missions and the growth of Spanish empire?
2. Consider both the initial transatlantic movement of Spanish religious and political energies as well as the establishment of missions in Texas and Mexico. Try creating a map that shows how Spanish Catholicism moved into and across the U.S. What do you think this says about Spanish colonialism?
3. How did Spain's interaction with France impact the establishment of the missions? Take, for example, Louis Juchereau de St. Denis as a figure who worked within both empires.
4. What does the growth of missions in southern Texas illustrate about the Mexican-American borderlands?
5. Compare the Catholic religious network in Texas with other religious colonial communities, such as the New England Puritans. How are they different and similar?
6. How are the missions of San Antonio part of a living history?

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Misiones católicas españolas y la historia de la frontera

Este módulo usa un diario de viajes y dibujos de misiones católicas en el sur de Texas para investigar la religión y colonialismo en las Américas.

Misiones católicas españolas y la historia de la frontera

Éste módulo puede ser usado para enseñar lecciones sobre encuentros transatlánticos y los comienzos coloniales. Temas del módulo incluyen: la religión, la cultura de la frontera, y el colonialismo. Profesores pueden empezar con la introducción de la historia del establecimiento de las misiones como un aspecto esencial del imperialismo español y la historia de la frontera, haciendo que los estudiantes consideren cómo instituciones religiosas funcionaron como agentes del colonialismo. La historia de las misiones de Texas da un ejemplo accesible para la clase, y se destaca en un documento del archivo digital [missing_resource: <http://oaap.rice.edu/index.php>][missing_resource: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27060>]

Al destacar los orígenes transatlánticos del imperialismo y de los movimientos del colonialismo español, estudiantes pueden entender las implicaciones transnacionales y nacionales del imperialismo temprano. Profesores podrían empezar con una discusión sobre el significado del término “transatlántico” y su función en la historia del colonialismo, la migración y el movimiento. El colonialismo español y la Reconquista son ejemplos más específicos. Las expediciones y misiones españolas en Norteamérica eran una consecuencia de la Reconquista española (718-1492). La energía detrás de este movimiento político-religioso, que propugnó una forma más militante del catolicismo, fue dirigido hacia la conquista del Nuevo Mundo y la conversión de los nativos. Aunque el poder político español fue fuertemente afiliado con el catolicismo, la religión y el imperialismo se ayudaban y dañaban mutuamente. A menudo, los colonos españoles, los soldados, y los misioneros católicos no estaban de acuerdo en cuanto a cómo interactuar con y someter a los indios; sin embargo, ambos funcionaron como formas influyentes del poder colonial. El historiador Herbert E. Bolton escribió: “[Los misioneros] eran, en parte a propósito y en parte por casualidad, políticos y civilizadores [...] y como tal, constituían una característica vital del sistema pionero de España” (46).

[\[footnote\]](#)

Mi traducción. Texto original: “Designedly in part, and incidentally in part, they [the missionaries] were political and civilizing [...] and as such they constituted a vital feature of Spain’s pioneering system.”

Mapa del imperio español

Mapa mundis del imperio español



Misiones de Texas y la historia de la frontera

Profesores pueden destacar la manera en que los misioneros españoles gradualmente construyeron una serie de misiones que se extiende a través de las fronteras nacionales actuales. Al enseñarles un mapa de las misiones de Texas (como el de abajo o uno de los varios mapas que se encuentran en el libro *Spanish Texas* por Chipman), los estudiantes podrán trazar el desarrollo del imperio español y sus misiones religiosas. Amenazados por el establecimiento de poblaciones francesas en Texas, los misioneros españoles se mudaron desde el suroeste de los EEUU a Texas y establecieron su primera misión, San Francisco de los Tejas en 1690, cerca de la ciudad actual de Nacogdoches. Por causa de enfermedad e inundación, los indios se empezaron a inquietar y amenazaron a los misioneros, y por consiguiente, éstos abandonaron el área. El fracaso inicial de San Francisco de los Tejas fue el comienzo de un patrón del establecimiento de misiones, inquietudes de parte de los indios y la retirada. Después del fracaso de la misión, los misioneros españoles se dirigieron más al sur, donde empezaron

Misiones, presidios y caminos españoles en los siglos XVII y XVIII

SPANISH MISSIONS, PRESIDIOS, AND ROADS IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES



Profesores también pueden enfatizar cómo el imperialismo español y los esfuerzos misioneros funcionaban en relación a otros imperios coloniales, muchas veces trabajando contra y con el imperialismo francés.

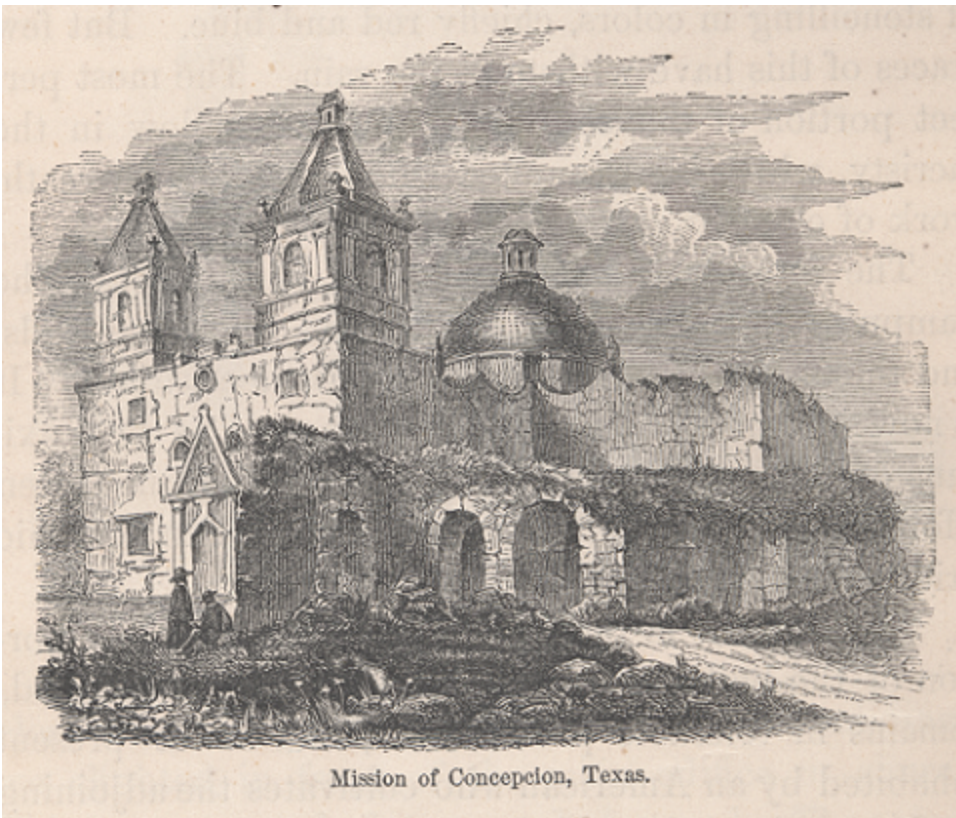
Enseñándoles a los estudiantes un mapa de los diferentes imperios que estaban funcionando a través de las Américas puede ayudarles a los estudiantes visualizar la manera en que se pueden comparar las fronteras coloniales con las fronteras naciones actuales. Después de haber pasado años lejos del este de Texas y la tribu indígena de los Tejas, los misioneros españoles quisieron reestablecer misiones en el área. Sin poder recibir ayuda de los españoles, buscaron a los franceses, quienes, queriendo comerciar con los colonos españoles, mandaron al notable Louis Jucjereau de St. Denis en 1714, un oficial y comerciante canadiense, experto en varias lenguas indígenas. St. Denis ayudó a fundar misiones en el este de Texas; sin embargo, debido a la falta de provisiones y la inquietud entre los indios, estas misiones pasaron apuros y eventualmente fueron abandonados en 1719, cuando los misioneros se retiraron a San Antonio.

Misiones Texanas: San José y Concepción

Misión San José



Misión Concepción



Dibujos de las misiones San José y Concepción de
Personal Narrative, por John Russell Bartlett

Es importante notar este traslado hacia el sur de Texas porque destaca un imperio religioso y colonial que recorre las fronteras nacionales actuales. Los misioneros fundaron Misión San Antonio de Valero en 1718 con la esperanza de establecer una parada entre el Río Bravo y las misiones del este de Texas, que carecían de provisiones y apoyo. San Antonio de Valero, que después se convirtió en el sitio del Álamo, empezó como una estructura humilde hecho de lodo, broza y paja. Con el éxito eventual de San Antonio de Valero, las Misiones San José y San Miguel fueron establecidas en las cercanías en 1720.

La narrativa de John Russel Bartlett, *Personal narrative of explorations & incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua, volume 1* evoca otro aspecto de la historia. Esta narrativa presenta detalles

sobre la estructura de las misiones de San Antonio, Texas en el siglo XIX, notando cuantas misiones estaban en desmoronamiento o habían sido dañadas durante la Intervención estadounidense en México. Su narrativa ofrece una manera de discutir estas misiones desde el momento de su fundación en la América española colonial y su estatus después de la Intervención. Bartlett escribe lo siguiente sobre una de las misiones: “El pueblo completo está en ruinas, y presenta una escena de desolación, que para un norteamericano es a la vez novedoso e interesante” (27). [\[footnote\]](#) Al usar su narrativa como manera de contextualizar la colonización temprana del suroeste de los EEUU, los estudiantes pueden considerar cómo las misiones y el colonialismo español construyeron una historia de la frontera que se extiende a través de e incluye el periodo del colonialismo español, la Intervención estadounidense en México y hasta la controversias sobre inmigración del siglo XXI.

Mi traducción. Texto original: “The whole town is in ruins, and presents a scene of desolation, which to an American is at once novel and interesting.”

Misión San José y Misión Concepción

Misión San José



Misión Concepción



Misiones San José y Concepción en San Antonio, TX hoy.

Hoy, las misiones de San Antonio, Texas son parte de una serie de sitios históricos de misiones a lo largo del Parque Histórico Nacional de las Misiones San Antonio, que incluye al Álamo, Misión San José (1720), Misión Concepción (1731), Misión San Juan Capistrano (1731) y Misión Espada (1731). Barlett visitó al Álamo, Misión San José, Misión Concepción y Misión San Juan Capistrano, notando el desmoronamiento y ruina. Estas misiones fueron restauradas a lo largo del siglo XX y conmemoran un aspecto esencial del imperialismo español. Profesores podrían asignarles a los estudiantes que busquen fotografías contemporáneas de estos dibujos y que las comparen con los dibujos y descripciones de Barlett. Estudiantes también podrían investigar cómo las misiones funcionan hoy en día como sitios que conmemoran el colonialismo español, mientras que continúan sirviendo comunidades religiosas y culturales actuales a través de Texas y su frontera con México.

Preguntas:

1. ¿Cuál es la relación entre las misiones católicas españolas y el crecimiento del imperio español?
2. Considera ambos movimientos transatlánticos iniciales de las energías españolas religiosas y políticas, como también el establecimiento de misiones en Texas y México. Crea un mapa que enseña cómo el catolicismo español se movió a través de los EEUU. ¿Qué crees que esto dice sobre el colonialismo español?
3. ¿En qué manera fue impactado el establecimiento de misiones por la interacción entre España y Francia? Por ejemplo, Louis Jucjereau de St. Denis como figura que trabajó con ambos imperios.
4. ¿Qué muestra el crecimiento de misiones en el sur de Texas sobre la frontera México-americana?
5. Compara la red católica religiosa en Texas con otras comunidades coloniales religiosas, como, por ejemplo, los puritanos de Nueva Inglaterra. ¿Cuáles son las diferencias y semejanzas?
6. ¿Cómo forman parte de una historia viva las misiones de San Antonio?

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Texas and U.S.-Mexican Conflict in the 1830s

This module utilizes two 1835 letters by James Cramp in order to comment upon tensions between the United States and Mexico during this period.

Texas and U.S.-Mexican Conflict in the 1830s

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According to his two letters, written in December of 1835, James Cramp had little to no investment in what had grown into a full-blown revolution. He boarded a ship in New Orleans that he assumed was bound for Texas, in hopes of discovering a new livelihood in an underdeveloped region. He professes surprise in his letters upon discovering that the ship is controlled by General José Antonio Mexía, an ardent federalist and a leader in Texas's fight for independence from Mexico. Cramp details how he and several other men were conscripted against their will into Mexía's company then spirited away to Tampico, Mexico in order to participate in an uprising there against Mexican national forces. In a tone of bitterness and resignation, he writes, "...dressed in the uniform of Mexía's troops have received the sentence of death with 22 other young men whose lives have been made a sacrifice to villainy and deception" (December 12th, 1835 letter, pg. 2). Mexía's forces were easily defeated; while he and the other leaders of the attack escaped unharmed, they left behind thirty-one men, all of whom were executed as "pirates." Cramp wrote both of his letters on the eve of his execution, giving an intimate voice to this violent episode in the histories of Mexico and Texas. The tide would quickly turn in the Texas War of independence. Though the Mexican army would score a victory at the Battle of the Alamo in March of 1836, the Texas Army led by Sam Houston delivered a final defeat to Santa Anna and his men at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21. Helpful sources on the Texas Revolution and related histories include William C. Davis's *Lone Star Rising: The Revolutionary Birth of the Texas Republic* and Paul D. Lack's *The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History 1835–1836* (bibliographical information provided at end of module).

Lock of hair sewn to piece of paper dated Dec. 13, 1835, Tampico, Mexico

Also located in the Americas Archive at Rice University, this lock of hair is most likely from one of the men executed after the Tampico Expedition.



A closer look at portions of the Cramp letters affords some valuable insight into important cultural and political relations among the U.S., Mexico, and Texas during this period. Cramp's first letter, written to his brother on December 12, 1835, points to the influx of Americans into Texas (termed "Texians" before the war) that placed additional strain upon the relationship between the Mexican government and one of its largest states. Again, Cramp planned to go to Texas in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities that it had to offer. As he writes, "I left New Orleans as my last letter home expressed, with a view to go to Texas in company with a great many others who like myself were seeking to better their circumstances" (1). Most Texians felt little, if any, loyalty to the nation of Mexico. The attempt by the Mexican government to broaden its reach violated the sense of independence that many of these settlers had come to Texas in search of in the first place.

The increasingly volatile issue of slavery emerged as a flashpoint for the tensions between Mexico and its swelling citizenry. A number of those who immigrated from the U.S. did so with their slaves, transplanting the plantation economy of the South into Mexican-controlled Texas. Mexico, however, had abolished slavery in its 1824 constitution, as did most newly

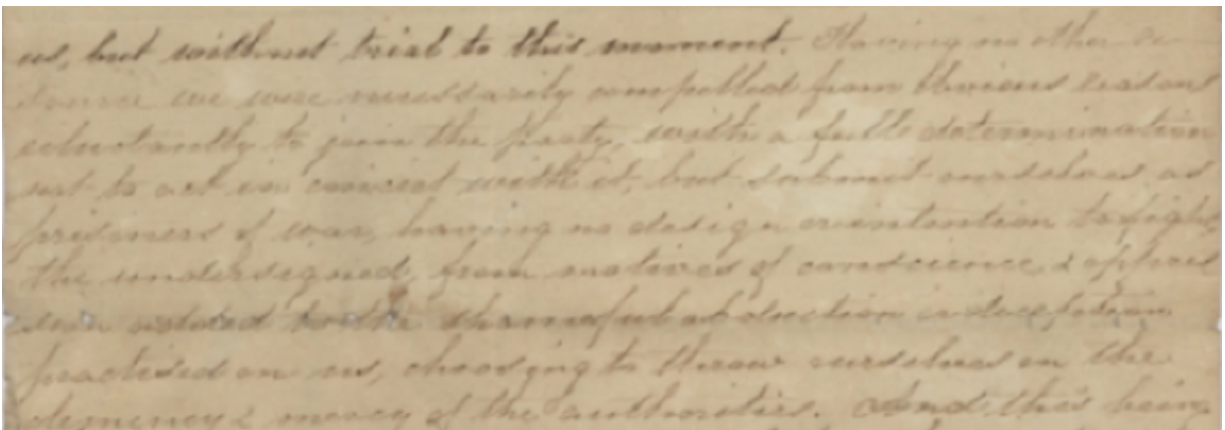
sovereign Latin American republics upon severing ties with Spain. Slaveholding Texans paid little attention to these laws, but Santa Anna and his fellow government officials planned to enforce them much more earnestly after the passing of the new constitution. Most historians agree that, as with the U.S. Civil War, slavery was a major factor behind the Texas War of Independence. The institution of slavery was not limited to individual countries or colonies, but rather slave holders, their slaves, as well as pro- and anti-slavery ideologies circulated throughout the hemisphere, fostering a transnational network of affiliations and conflicts. As we see in this instance, even non-slaveholding nations could be directly affected by the powder keg of tensions incited by slavery.

Cramp's letters also suggest the fluidity of national identity and the instability of political affiliations at this point within the nineteenth-century Americas. In his December 12th, 1835 letter Cramp angrily asserts his U.S. citizenship in an attempt to express the full injustice of his situation to his brother: "It ill becomes one so near the point of death to make an expression of hatred to any individual, but will the United States permit their citizens to be abducted by men who are now in the bosom in the midst of affluence and luxury?" (2). Cramp's second December 1835 letter, an explanation of what happened and a declaration of innocence written on behalf of all of the condemned men, highlights the multi-national composition of the abducted individuals: "130 men, composed of Americans, French & Germans two thirds of which being of the first names (including three who are natives of foreign nations but naturalized)" (1). Ironically, due to a combination of geographic and economic circumstances, these men die in the name of a future Texas republic to which most of them feel no commitment. Cramp must have seen his economic plans as somehow separate from Texas's broader political embroilments. He makes his lack of devotion to any sort of "Texas cause" clear when he writes in his undated December 1835 letter, "Having no other resource we were necessarily compelled from obvious reasons reluctantly to join the party, with a full determination not to act in concert with it, but submit ourselves as prisoners of war, having no design or intention to fight, undersigned, from motives of conscience & apprehension added to the shameful abduction or deception practiced on us, choosing to throw ourselves on the clemency & mercy of the authorities" (see Figure 2). It was the overlapping of Mexican, U.S., and

Texan sociopolitical realities that enabled the tragedy detailed in Cramp's letters. Examining these complex interconnections more closely, through documents like these, can help us to understand better the transnational, transcolonial historical processes that defined the nineteenth century.

Letter from James Cramp, December 1835

Excerpt from James Cramp's second letter written from Tampico, Mexico.



Texas proved to be a central player in the unfolding of nineteenth-century U.S.-Mexican conflicts. We have already seen how U.S. citizens were instrumental in fostering the tensions that would help define the Texas Revolution. The U.S.'s annexation of Texas in 1845 was a major cause of the U.S. Mexican War, which would commence in 1846. Since Mexico still viewed Texas as its rightful territory, it warned the U.S. that annexation would amount to a declaration of war. The war resulted in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which saw over a million square miles of territory transfer from Mexico to the United States. Though tied to a relatively minor event from the Texas War of Independence, Cramp's letters anticipate and gesture toward these larger tensions between the U.S. and Mexico. These letters could be brought into several classroom situations, especially in the study of Texas history, the Texas Revolution in particular, and the history of U.S.-Mexico relations. As with so many documents in the archive, the Cramp letters place a human face and voice on what can otherwise seem like remote historical phenomena, an enticing prospect for scholar and student alike.

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Texas y el conflicto entre los EEUU y México en los años 1830
Este módulo utiliza dos cartas de James Cramp de 1835 para notar las tensiones entre los Estados Unidos y México durante estos años.

Texas y el conflicto entre los EEUU y México en los años 1830

Este módulo es una traducción de: Ledoux, Cory. "Texas and U.S.-Mexican Conflict in the 1830s." ed. AnaMaria Seglie. Connexions.
<http://cnx.org/content/m38436/1.3/>.

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Según estas dos cartas escritas en diciembre 1835, James Cramp no tenía ningún interés en lo que se había convertido en plena revolución. Asumió que el buque que abordó en Nueva Orleans iba a Texas, adonde iba con la esperanza de ganarse la vida en una región no desarrollada. Las cartas manifiestan su sorpresa al descubrir que el buque era controlado por el General José Antonio Mexía, un federalista ferviente y un líder en la Revolución de Texas. Cramp destaca cómo él y varios hombres fueron reclutados contra su voluntad para la compañía de Mexía, y luego llevados a Tampico, México para participar en una rebelión contra las fuerzas nacionales mexicanas. En un tono de amargura y resignación, escribe: “vestidos del uniforme de las tropas de Mexía han sido condenados a muerte junto con los otros 22 jóvenes, cuyas vidas han sido sacrificados a la villanía y la decepción” (2). El ejército de Mexía fue derrotado fácilmente; él y otros líderes del ataque escaparon ilesos, dejando atrás treinta un hombres, quienes fueron fusilados como “piratas”. Cramp escribe ambas cartas el día antes de ser fusilado, dando una voz íntima a este episodio violento de las historias de México y Texas. Las tornas se voltearon rápidamente durante la Revolución de Texas. Aunque el ejército mexicano saldría victorioso en la Batalla del Álamo en marzo del 1836, el ejército texano, dirigido por Sam Houston, derrotó a Santa Anna y sus tropas en la Batalla de San Jacinto el 21 de abril.

Mechón de pelo, cosido a un papel con fecha de 13 de diciembre, 1835,
Tampico, México

Este [missing_resource: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/21800>]Americas Archive de Rice University) probablemente es de uno de los hombres fusilados después de la expedición del General Mexía a Tampico.



Una lectura cuidadosa de porciones de las cartas de Cramp ofrece una perspectiva única hacia las relaciones culturales y políticas importantes entre los EEUU, México, y Texas durante estos años. La [missing_resource: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/36228>]

La cuestión cada vez más inestable de la esclavitud surgió como un detonante para las tensiones entre México y su masa de ciudadanos. Muchos de los que habían inmigrado desde los EEUU habían traído a sus esclavos, trasplantando la economía de la plantación del sur de los EEUU al estado mexicano de Texas. México, sin embargo, había abolido la esclavitud en su constitución de 1824 (como también lo habían hecho la mayoría de las nuevas repúblicas Latinoamericanas al independizarse de España). Los texanos que tenían esclavos le pusieron muy poca atención a estas leyes, pero Santa Anna y sus oficiales gubernamentales planeaban hacerse cumplir dichas leyes después de la ratificación de la nueva constitución. La mayoría de historiadores están de acuerdo de que, como sucedió con la Guerra Civil estadounidense, la esclavitud era el factor más significativo en la Revolución de Texas. La institución de la esclavitud no era limitada a países o colonias individuales, sino a los dueños de esclavos, sus esclavos, como también las ideologías esclavistas y antiesclavistas que

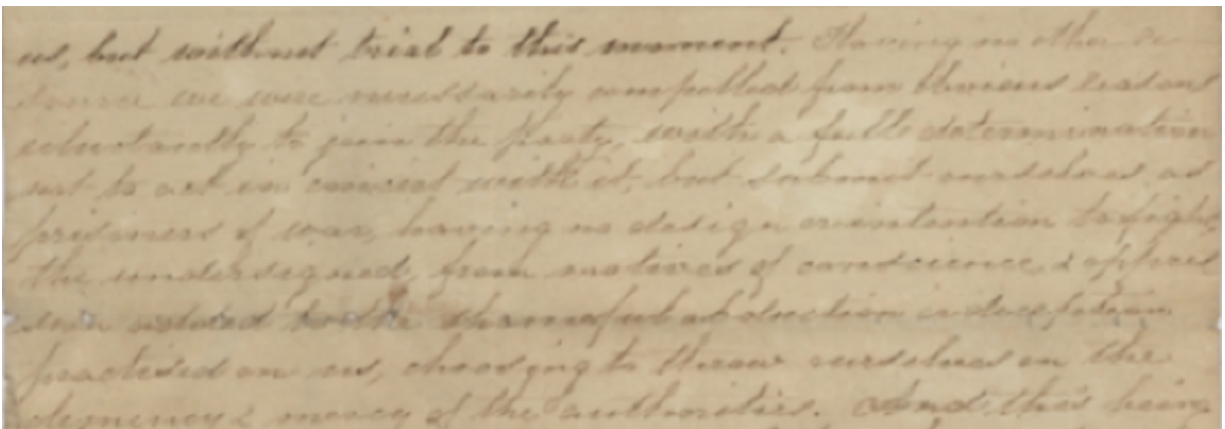
circulaban en todo el hemisferio, fomentando una red transnacional de afiliaciones y conflictos. Como se puede ver en esta instancia, hasta las naciones no esclavistas podrían ser afectadas directamente por el polvorín de tensiones creado por la esclavitud.

Las cartas de Cramp también sugieren la fluidez de la identidad nacional y la inestabilidad de afiliaciones políticas en las Américas durante el siglo XIX. En su [missing_resource: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/36228>]

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Carta de James Cramp, diciembre 1835

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Texas resultó ser central al desarrollo de los conflictos EEUU-México del siglo XIX. Hemos visto como ciudadanos estadounidenses eran instrumentales en el fomento de tensiones que definirían la Revolución de Texas. La anexión de Texas por los EEUU en 1845 era una de las mayores causas de la Intervención estadounidense en México, que comenzó en 1846. Como México aun veía a Texas como su territorio legal, le advirtió a los EEUU que la anexión resultaría en una declaración de guerra. Esta guerra resultó en el Tratado de Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), tratado que trasladó más de dos millones de kilómetros cuadrados de territorio mexicano a los EEUU. Aunque las cartas de Cramp están atadas a un evento aparentemente insignificante de la Revolución de Texas, anticipan y articulan estas tensiones más grandes entre los EEUU y México. Estas cartas se podrían usar en varias maneras en la clase, especialmente en el estudio de la historia de Texas, la Revolución de Texas en particular, y la historia de relaciones

EEUU-México. Al igual que muchos documentos en el archivo, las cartas de Cramp le dan una cara y una voz humana a lo que de otro modo parecen ser fenómenos históricos lejanos, una posibilidad atractivo tanto para académicos como estudiantes.

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Native Americans in Texas during the U.S.-Mexican War, 1846-1848
This module uses a group of documents, the "Communication[s] from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," to discuss how to teach Texas Native American history.

Native Americans in Texas during the U.S.-Mexican War, 1846-1848

In recent years, scholars and educators have worked towards more complex depictions of Native Americans, as opposed to reducing the entirety of Native American history to one long Trail of Tears, culminating in present-day reservation life. These advances in scholarship are now appearing in the classroom via discussions of the persistence of Indian culture and identity. Note: Throughout this module I use the terms "Native Americans" and "Indians" interchangeably, as is the current practice in the historical profession. Texas historians, in particular, have embraced the concept of Indian agency and have sought out sources that support this 'new' approach to native history. However, the search for sources remains difficult as most Anglo-American, Spanish, French, and Mexican documents silence more Native American voices than they reveal. U.S government documents provide one window into the fraught relations between these groups. A collection of documents in the [missing_resource: <http://oaap.rice.edu/>] [missing_resource: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27072>]

The Texas agency of the Office of Indian Affairs was officially established on March 20, 1847. Robert S. Neighbors was the first special agent for Texas and that is why many of the official communications are to/from him. Neighbors's responsibilities included maintaining communications with the Indians in the state, providing gifts to the Indians in order to facilitate trade, and evaluating the strengths/weaknesses of various Indian groups. But, he had to be careful not to appear too powerful as Texas prior to 1848 was an area of "undefined relative jurisdiction," not yet belonging to the United States (March 19, 1847, letter). With the backdrop of the Mexican War, Neighbors, as revealed in these communications, waged a cultural war against Indians in Texas. Therefore, the documents would be best discussed within a lesson on the Mexican War, Manifest Destiny, and expansionism. For a quick, visual synopsis of the Mexican War see the PBS video special

[missing_resource:

http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/index_flash.html]*Crisis in the Southwest* (2002) (see full biographical details below), a concise, accurate overview of the war period. The module, [missing_resource:

<http://cnx.org/content/m13831/latest/>]

Comanche Camp

An image of a Comanche camp, similar to one that would have been found in Texas during the Mexican War period.



The idea of the U.S. simultaneously waging a war on two fronts, the official war against Mexico and the cultural war against Indian inhabitants, is an effective way to begin a discussion of this period. With this interpretation in mind, the information gathered by Neighbors regarding Indian numbers, etc., takes on a more sinister tone. The March 19, 1847, letter is particularly important because it demonstrates how he was essentially evaluating the enemy, as the Indians stood in the way of the “expansion of the white population.” One weapon that Neighbors used to subdue the Indian population was gift giving. At one point, the U.S. government provided him with ten thousand dollars to buy presents for Texas Indians (March 20, 1847, letter). Educators can use the gift practices of this U.S. agent as an entry point into a discussion of the multiple meanings of gifts and the possibility for cultural miscommunications. For example, while Neighbors wanted the gifts to demonstrate the power of the U.S. government, the Indians interpreted the gifts in their own way. As Neighbors laments, “every present which they[the Indians] receive they look upon as an additional proof of our fear...” (November 3, 1838, report). To add depth to the

exploration of the meaning of the gift, see anthropologist M. Mauss's well-known work *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (2000). In particular, educators should focus on the introduction to *The Gift*, which is quite short, as well as the foreword, which changes depending on the edition/editor.

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A Native American Camp

The process of drying meat in a Native American camp.



This collection of documents also provides an interesting way to teach critical reading from a historical perspective. After introducing Neighbors as a complex figure striving to please a variety of factions, and to stay alive, educators can ask students to dissect the rest of the communications. For example, students can identify particular phrases that demonstrate prejudice against, or sympathy for, the situation of Indians in Texas. The November 3, 1838, report is one document that contains a range of emotions, including growing frustration on the part of Anglo-American negotiators. Another exercise could focus on trying to find the native 'voice' within the documents. Basically, what would a Native American account of the same events/encounters look like? And, once a class feels confident in their ability to 'read between the lines' of historical texts, an educator can challenge them with other primary sources, such as those found within Dorman Winfrey's *The Indian Papers, 1846-1859* (1960). Many of the

documents within the Winfrey collection describe accusations of theft made against Indian groups (see Winfrey pg.230 “Newspaper Item Concerning Indian Depredations”), the same issue Neighbors wrestles with in his official communications. Educators can challenge students to explore how stereotypes of Indian thievery might have spread the same way that rumors travel in the present day. And, what purposes do these falsehoods serve in the bigger picture of cultural power struggle?

Cynthia Ann Parker

An image of famous Indian captive Cynthia Ann Parker.



One theme regarding Native American scholarship that educators can teach in the classroom is the transition of historical studies from a focus on victimization to an emphasis on native agency and power. For example, Juliana Barr’s recent work *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman* (2007) uses gender analysis to argue that Indians in early Texas were able negotiators with the Spanish. A mention of Barr’s work during the ‘Exploration of North America’ part of a course can set the tone for later lectures using the official communications documents. The Indians that appear within these reports and letters are strong and culturally vivid. In particular, it might surprise students to learn that there were Anglo individuals who, after being taken captive and then given the opportunity to

return, chose to stay with their Indian captors. The August 8, 1846, letter includes information on captives, as well as the cultural practices of the Indians. The stories of these particular individuals, such as Cynthia Ann Parker (see figure 3), provide a counter-narrative to the popular 'Indian captivity' story. However, educators can also stress that the Indians of Texas were eventually pushed beyond the initial Anglo/Indian boundary line of the Brazos River to emphasize that the Indian story is not one of total triumph or total defeat.

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Antebellum U.S. Migration and Communication

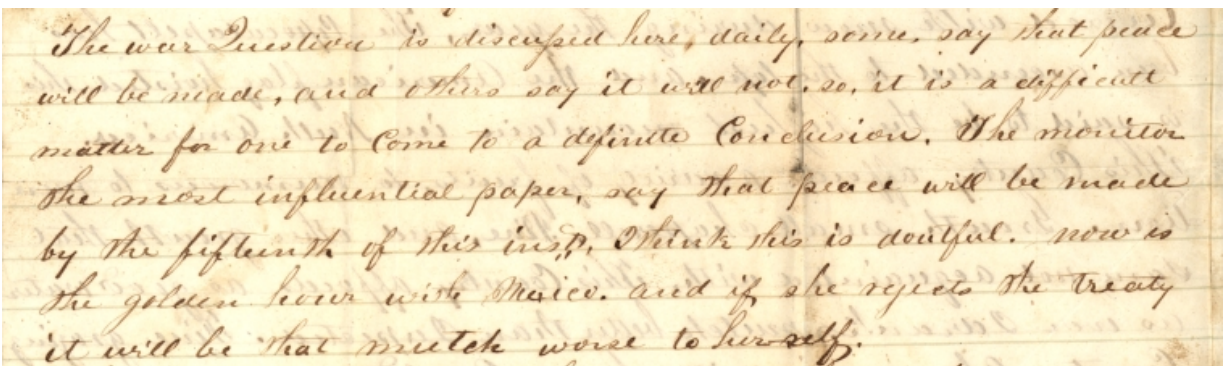
This module, based upon a travel diary and two letters, looks at 1830s/1840s Texas and the nature of communication and migration.

Antebellum U.S. Migration and Communication

The nineteenth century in the United States was a period of movement. A wave of migration in the 1830s and 1840s witnessed easterners heading out from established states into unsettled territories and challenging new environments across the West and Southwest. These migratory adventures slowed significantly during the late 1850s, 1860s, and early 1870s, as individuals were drawn into the Civil War and its aftermath. However, by the 1880s, many people were on the move again, often trying to get to the west coast and finding themselves stranded in mid-America. Despite the military and social conflicts of the 1830s and 1840s, Texas, or the land that would become Texas, became a popular settlement point for migrants from a wide variety of backgrounds and with an equally diverse set of goals. Two letters and a travel diary, available online as part of the [missing_resource: <http://oaap.rice.edu/>]

Question of War

A selection from a letter that M. Mattock sent to Major McEwen on [missing_resource: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9241>]

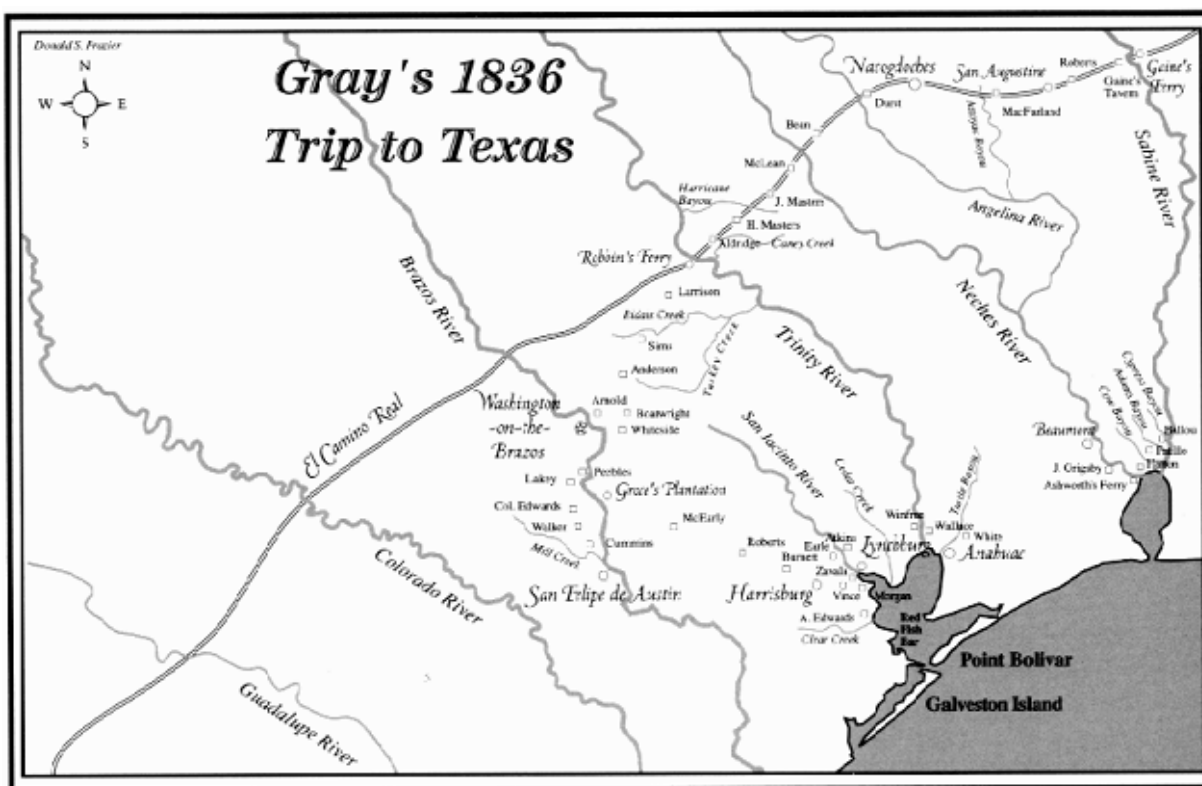


As it is critical to understand geography when discussing travel movements, to facilitate the lesson an educator could project onto a screen a map of the United States, so that students can visualize the actual movements of the individuals in question. The class can be organized around a series of

questions: why did people migrate? how did they perform these migrations (logistics)? what challenges did they face during travel? how did all of these individuals keep in contact as the nation expanded? An educator can start the conversation by asking students why people migrate today, perhaps providing an overview of push/pull factors. For example, in his [missing_resource: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27221>] *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (2003). It is also critical to stress that these choices to migrate were often laden with conflict, as certain family members would resist the move for a variety of reasons. To understand these disagreements it might be useful to assign segments of the diaries of women provided within Joan Cashin's *A Family Venture: Men and Women on the Southern Frontier* (1991).

Map of Gray's Journey

A map tracing Colonel Gray's 1836 trip to Texas. This map can be analyzed alongside Gray's diary.

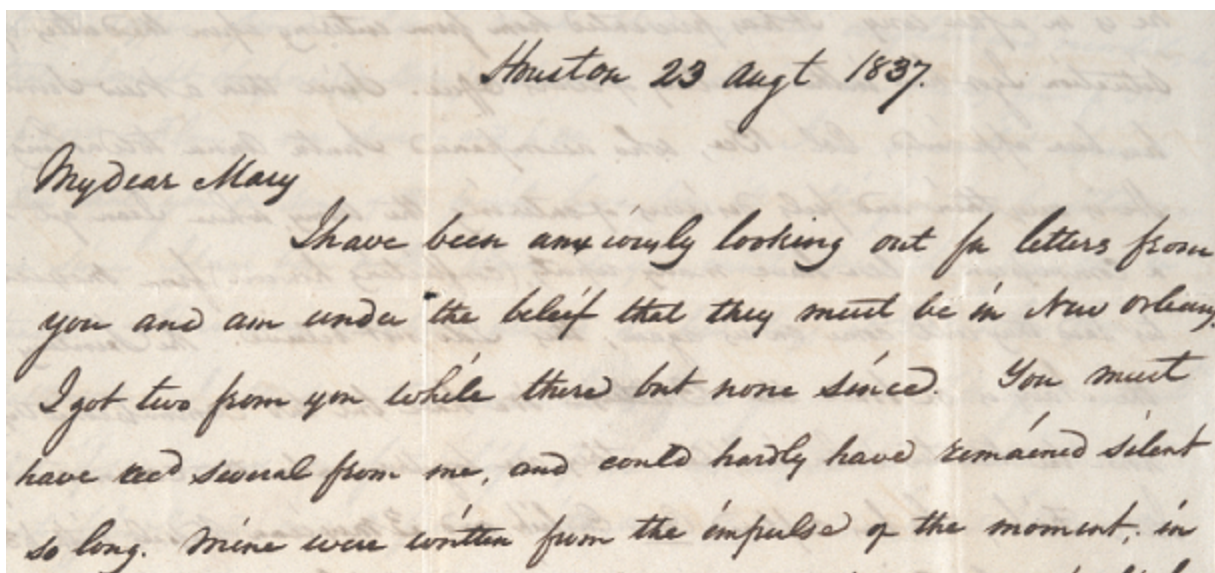


The migration process itself was quite often difficult and dangerous in nature, regardless of prior preparations. At this point, ask students to go

through Gray's diary making a list of the challenges that he faced during his travel period. This exercise will result in a lively conversation as Gray recalls everything from intoxicated coach passengers to seductive widows. Sickness and injury resulted in a constant parade of interesting figures before Gray. On Oct. 11, 1835, he wrote, "here I am, at the end of my journey (that is, across Virginia), without one of the companions that I set out with! What a picture of the way-fare of human life!" Although Gray travelled on his own, his diary allows for an introduction into a current debate amongst historians. The debate focuses on the degree to which family and kin connections mattered with regards to migrations. Namely, is the solo adventurer model true or was it more common for extended family lines to make the trek? For lecture material on this subject see Carolyn Earle Billingsley's *Communities of Kinship* (2004), which makes an argument for kin-centered migration. Educators can also return to the map at this point and ask students to trace the movements of Gray by using the clues contained within his diary. This will impress upon students the fact that travel took much longer during this period than it does today.

Forrest Letter

An excerpt from a [missing_resource:
<http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27243>]



Houston 23 Aug 1837

My dear Mary

I have been anxiously looking out for letters from you and am under the belief that they must be in New Orleans. I got two from you while there but none since. You must have rec'd several from me, and could hardly have remained silent so long. Mine were written from the impulse of the moment, in

It can also be stressed that communication happened at a slow pace, especially as compared to our modern computer age. In the antebellum

period, letters were one of the principal methods of communication and, in fact, letter writing evolved into an art form. It might be revealing to ask students how many letters they have written in their lifetime. Then, ask them to look at two letters: one 1848 letter by M. Mattock from Molina Del Rey, Mexico, and another 1837 letter from Moreau Forrest in Houston, Texas. How is news conveyed within these letters? Mattock describes how the “war Question” is discussed daily at his location while Forrest (over ten years earlier) also mentions that an impending war with Mexico is a possibility. Forrest, in particular, laments the sluggish pace of the mail service and he writes a relative, “I have been anxiously looking out for letters from you and am under the belief that they must be in New Orleans. I got two from you while there but none since. You must have had several from me...” At this juncture you could request students to write a letter to a family member describing their day, using similar language and formatting as these early letters. Or, you could have them model a letter off of a diary entry/day in the life of William Gray. These exercises will help students to grasp the history of the period while also comprehending what it felt like to be an antebellum traveler.

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Discovering U.S. Empire through the Archive

This module explores 19th-century relations between the U.S. and Mexico as well as the U.S. and Native Americans through the travel journal of Mirabeau B. Lamar, the second president of the Republic of Texas.

Discovering U.S. Empire through the Archive

An important turn in American Studies over the past twenty years has begun to read U.S. expansionism in the nineteenth century as part of a larger imperialist project. Whereas older histories tended to coordinate the U.S.'s territorial growth with the spread of democracy across the Americas, the "New American Studies," as it came to be called, saw in it an aggressive desire for economic and political domination that echoed contemporary European imperial powers. The established historical narrative largely accepted that at the turn of the century the Spanish American War, during which the U.S. occupied such locales as Cuba and the Philippines, marked a turn in U.S. political activity toward an imperialist-inflected globalization. However, newer critics now pointed toward earlier instances, including the U.S.-Mexican War and the subsequent appropriation of vast Mexican lands, as manifestations of U.S. imperialism. Moreover, in their studies, they applied the paradigms of imperialism to longstanding U.S. practices such as Native American removal and African slavery. One of the earliest significant works to mark such a shift in scholarly perception was a collection of essays entitled *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, edited by Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease. Several studies followed that took seriously the proposal that the nineteenth-century U.S. operated as an empire, including Malini Schueller's *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature*, Shelley Streeby's *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture*, and Eric Sundquist's *Empire and Slavery in American Literature*. What most of these works shared in common was that they emerged from the field of cultural studies, rather than from a straight historical perspective. Indeed, the concept of nineteenth-century U.S. imperialism has had a profound impact on cultural studies, as critics began to interpret literary and artistic productions in terms of either their participating in or critiquing the U.S. as empire.

The [missing_resource: <http://oaap.rice.edu/>][missing_resource: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/21658>]*The Poet President of Texas: The Life of Mirabeau B. Lamar, President of the Republic of Texas.*

Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar

A 19th-century portrait of Lamar.



Lamar was participating in a popular nineteenth-century literary genre in authoring his travel journal. The most popular travel narratives produced in the late nineteenth generally involved journeys to foreign lands, usually Europe or the Holy Land. It was not uncommon during the first half of the century, however, for U.S.-authored travel narratives to focus on domestic sojourns, particularly ones to the nation's ever shifting western frontier. Lamar begins by declaring his intention to settle in Texas if he can discover there a profitable opportunity for himself. His travel journal follows his journey from Columbus, Georgia to Mobile to New Orleans to Baton Rouge to Natchitoches, Louisiana and finally into Texas. At each stop, he provides an extended history of the area along with an account of the contemporary social, religious, and cultural practices that he is able to observe. His "histories" operate through a combination of formal, official facts and local, often humorous anecdotes. Before it arrives at his experiences in Texas, the longest section of Lamar's journal is the one concerned with the city of New Orleans. He moves frequently between histories of the region, including a long history on the settlement of the Louisiana Territory in

general, and his observations of everyday life in the city. Interestingly, he spends a great deal of time on the city's churches and various religious sects, leading him to comment, "The Methodist I believe are the only sect that has sincerely done any thing for the negroes; a large portion of their congregation and members are black" (13). What is especially noteworthy about this passage is that marks one of the only instances in which Lamar mentions the presence of African Americans in his text. Unlike many other travel narratives of the time, Lamar's is barely concerned with the issues of slavery or relations between black and white populations. It is certainly not around the issue of slavery that Lamar's journal provides us with insight into U.S. imperialist ideology. Instead, we must look to his treatment of both American Indians and Mexico in order to excavate the specters of U.S. empire from his writings.

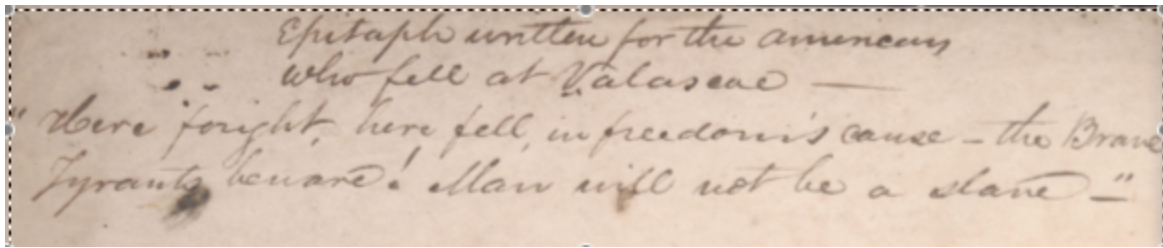
Lamar encounters several Native American tribes during his journey to Texas, including the Comanche and the Caddo. He writes at greatest length about the Comanche, whom he primarily characterizes by their warlike and nomadic natures. It is the latter quality that feeds into Lamar's indirect justification of the U.S.'s continued westward expansion. He writes, "All the beauties and blessings of nature, all the blessings of industry; all the luxuries that God and art have contributed to place within the reach of man, despised and unheeded by this iron race who seem to have no aim ambition or desire beyond . . . the uncouth wildness of native liberty & unrestrained liscence" (55). Lamar's implication is that if tribes such as the Comanche will not take advantage of the productive land all around them, then another group of people – namely white Americans – should be able to. He deploys much the same rhetoric when discussing the population he terms the "natives" of Texas, whom he describes as the product of intermarriage between Spaniards and the region's Indians. First, he racializes them, differentiating them based upon the darkness of their skin: "They are of dark swarthy complexion, darker than the inhabitants of old Spain & not possessing the clear red of the Indians" (37). He goes on to name these people among the laziest in the known world, claiming, "These people have long been in possession of the fairest country in the world . . . and yet from their constitutional & habitual indolence & inactivity they have suffered these advantages to remain unimproved" (38). In order to explain the mass migration of Americans into this region, he portrays Texas as an

uncultivated territory waiting upon the arrival of an eager and industrious population. Again, Lamar is operating within a long discursive tradition that uses unexploited economic opportunity as a rationale for imperialist projects.

Lamar reserves his praise of Native Americans for the lost Aztecan and Mayan societies of Mexico. Evaluating the state of these societies at the time of Hernándo Cortés's invasion, he writes, "This is manifest from the stupendous works of arts and monuments of ingenuity which were destroyed by the above brutal & ferocious invader who treated this people as an ignorant race, himself however not knowing a letter in the alphabet" (56). Here he is rearticulating a version of the Black Legend, a narrative which casts the practices of the Spanish Empire in the Americas in as negative light as possible. This version of history insists that Spanish imperialism exhibited a more violent and evil nature than the colonizing practices of other European powers. One payoff of Lamar's introduction of this discourse into his journal is that it makes the modern processes of Native American removal seem like a humane venture when compared to the atrocities committed by Spain. The other result for the journal is that the Black Legend discourse initiates a rhetorical strain in which Lamar contrasts present day Mexico (an inheritor of Spanish power in North America) as an embodiment of tyranny against the U.S. as a representative of freedom. He makes this dichotomy most explicit when recounting a tribute to those who died in the 1832 Battle of Velasco, a conflict between Texas colonists and Mexico that anticipated the Texas Revolution: "Epitaph written for the Americans who fell at Velasco – 'Who fought here fell in freedom's cause – the Brave Tyrants beware! Man will not be a slave – '" (see Figure 2). Lamar frames the growing Texas Revolution not as a fight against federalism or a struggle to maintain the institution of slavery – how most historians have since interpreted it – but rather as a righteous strike against despotism in the Americas.

Mirabeau B. Lamar Travel Journal, 1835

An actual excerpt from the very end of Lamar's travel journal.



Mexico's disconnect from the principles of justice, according to Lamar, has resulted in a Texas territory that has fallen into lawlessness and violence. The resonance here with his description of the Comanche is purposeful, as he feels that neither they nor Mexico is worthy of controlling Texas and its bountiful resources. Lamar critiques the Mexican residents of Texas for their ignorance of the modern legal system when he writes, "Amongst other petitions this province laid in one for a system of Judicature more consistent with the education and habits of the american population which was readily granted, but the members of the Legislature, familiar with no system but their own were at a loss to devise one which would likely prove adequate to the wants and suited to the genius of the people" (77). Texas emerges in the journal, then, as a site in need of order and desperate for progress. While Mexico and the region's Indians cannot provide these things, Lamar indicates that American settlers bring with them the promise of both peaceful stability and economic productivity. Ultimately, the place of Texas within the historiography of U.S. as empire is a complex one. After all, the U.S. itself was not directly involved in the Texas Revolution, though many of the revolutionaries hailed from the United States originally. However, its 1845 annexation to the U.S. shortly before the outbreak of the U.S.-Mexican War continued to involve Texas in the escalating tensions between the two countries. Lamar recognized the critiques that could be leveled against U.S. settlers and their actions in Texas, and much of his journal is designed to justify their behavior. Taking these histories into account, it would be worthwhile to compare some of the language found in Lamar's travel journal with the rhetoric driving U.S. expansionism over the course of the nineteenth century.

Lamar's involvement in the Texas Revolution, as glimpsed in this journal, already makes him an important figure in the burgeoning field of inter-American studies. His participation in the U.S.-Mexican war and the time he spends in Nicaragua further cement him as a person of great interest to

those students and scholars who wish to use a hemispheric approach in the study of American history and culture. These latter two ventures also resulted in several poems, in which Lamar writes adoringly of beautiful local women. During his time as a soldier in Mexico, he produced “To a Mexican Girl” and “Carmelita,” while his ambassadorship to Nicaragua saw his writing of “The Belle of Nindiri” and “The Daughter of Mendoza,” all of which can be found in *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*. Lamar’s travel journal will prove useful to literature and history classrooms alike that take inter-American studies as a point of interest. Moreover, it could play a central role in courses devoted to the history of Texas as well as to the history of U.S.-Mexican relations. Like any number of documents found in the ‘Our Americas’ Archive, Lamar’s journal ultimately invites us to forge connections across both geopolitical and disciplinary boundaries.

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